

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DOHA 00801 021314Z

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 /025 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0640

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0801

LIMDIS

FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECRE EIND QA

SUBJ: POSSIBLE MAJOR CONTRACT FOR US FIRM

1. WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY MANAGING PARTNER OF PROMINENT LOCAL FIRM, ORIENT CONTRACTING AND TRADING CO, CONCERNING POSSIBLE INTEREST OF BECHTEL IN DOING BUSINESS IN QATAR. PARTNER SAID HE WISHES TO KNOW IF BECHTEL INTERESTED IN LONG TERM ARRANGEMENT TO SERVE AS CONSTRUCTION MANAGER FOR GOVT PROJECTS. IF SO, HE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE BECHTEL OFFICIAL TO VISIT QATAR FOR TALKS WITH COMPANY AND GOQ OFFICIALS.

2. PARTNER SAID THAT HE HAS DISCUSSED IDEA OF GOQ CONTRACT WITH PRIVATE FIRM TO SUPERVISE GOVERNMENT FUNDED CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS WITH TWO TOP GOQ OFFICIALS WHO VERY CLOSE TO AMIR. THESE ARE AMIR'S OFFICE MANAGER (AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION) AND HIS CHIEF TECHNICAL ADVISOR. PARTNER SAID BOTH INDICATED THAT GOVERNMENT READY TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT IF FIRM CAN BE LOCATED. ACCORDING PARTNER, PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER WOULD TAKE OVER NUMBER OF FUNCTIONS PRESENTLY ASSIGNED TO MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS. MINISTRY, ESPECIALLY ITS BRITISH DIRECTOR, IS REPORTEDLY OUT OF FAVOR AS RESULT OF SEVERAL BADLY MISMANAGED PROJECTS, NOTABLY DOHA HOSPITAL ANZFAIRPORT (PREVIOUSLY REPORTED). PROJECTS WHOSE COSTS WILL EXCEED ONE BILLION DOLLARS ARE IN OFFING.

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PAGE 02 DOHA 00801 021314Z

3. PARTNER STRESSED THAT ABOVE MUST BE HELD IN EXTREMELY CLOSE

CONFIDENCE. ANY MOVE TO CUT POWERS OF MINISTRY WOULD BE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED BY MPW DIRECTOR (WHO NOT KNOWN FOR HIS SUPPORT OF US FIRMS). RESULT OF PREMATURE EXPOSURE COULD BE MAJOR POLITICAL FLAP THAT WOULD SINK PROPOSAL BEFORE IT IS LAUNCHED.

4. REQUEST DEPT CONTACT FORMER AMBASSADOR PARKER T. HART WHO NOW WITH BECHTEL AND INFORM HIM OF THIS MAJOR OPPORTUNITY. HART SHOULD BE ADVISED OF FULL SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE BUT REQUESTED NOT RPT NOT TO PASS INFORMATION IN PARA 2 TO OTHER COMPANY OFFICIALS AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF DELICACY OF LOCAL SITUATION. IF HART/BECHTEL INTERESTED IN PURSUING OPPORTUNITY, IT IS REQUIRED THAT HE OR OTHER SENIOR BECHTEL OFFICIAL VISIT DOHA FOR TALKS WITH GOQ AND ORIENT CONTRACTING. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP.

5. SINCE THIS REPRESENTS POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH FOR US IN AREA HEAVILY DOMINATED BY BRITISH, WE HOPE BECHTEL WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY. SHOULD BECHTEL NOT BE INTERESTED, REQUEST DEPT PROVIDE US WITH NAMES OF OTHER COMPANIES PROMINENT THIS FIELD SO THAT WE CAN GET THESE WITH ORIENT. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY OTHER FIRM BE APPROACHED RE THIS OPPORTUNITY UNTIL WE HAVE CLEARED IT WITH ORIENT.
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